

formed of a fleece of sintered stainless fibers 5 and woven wire mesh 6.

If the Examiner corresponds the filter material 3 to the claimed screening medium and the inner cage 1 to the backing plate, as set forth in Claim 1, there is nothing which corresponds to the claimed openings in the screening medium which are elongated and extend in a generally axial direction substantially normal to the circumferential extent of the recesses. That is to say, while the recesses or grooves 7 may extend circumferentially in the inner cage 1 of Jameson et al., nothing in the filtering medium 3 corresponds to the claimed openings. Conversely, if the Examiner corresponds the screening medium to the inner cage 1 and the backing plate to the filter medium 3, applicants submit that the filter medium 3 is not a structural member and does not serve the purpose of affording structural support to the screening medium as claimed. By forming elongated openings in the screening medium which extend in a generally axial direction, it is clear that one of the objectives of the present invention, i.e., improved flow capacity through the screen, is achieved. Applicants therefore submit that Claim 1 as amended clearly patentable distinguishes over Jameson et al.

With respect to Claim 3, it relates the size of the recesses in the axial direction and the openings in the screen cylinder and these dimensional relationships are not disclosed in the Jameson et al. reference. For example, if the grooves 7

in Jameson et al. extend circumferentially, then the openings in the inner cage 1 are not elongated sufficiently to extend in a generally axial direction substantially normal to the circumferential extent of the recesses to span two or more recesses. In Figure 6, the grooves 11 do not extend axially at least plural times the axial extent of the projections defining those grooves, while at the same time, the openings in the screening medium have an extent sufficient to span two or more of the recesses. There is certainly no teaching of this in Jameson et al.

Turning to Claim 12, if the inner cage 1 of Jameson et al. corresponds to the screening medium, there is no structural backing plate disclosed in Jameson et al. for that screening medium. If the screening medium is identified at 3 in Jameson et al., and the backing plate is the inner cage 1, it is clear that the screening medium 3 does not have slots which have contoured portions on an inflow side thereof.

The screen cylinder is detailed in Claim 13. Particularly, Claim 13 requires the recesses to extend circumferentially and substantially uninterruptedly about the one screening medium or backing plate, in combination with slots in the screening medium extending in a generally axial direction and in a direction normal to the circumferential extent of the recesses. No such arrangement is disclosed in Jameson et al. If the inner cage 1 corresponds to the screening medium, not only is there no structural backing plate but either one of the recited recesses

or slots are omitted from the Jameson et al. disclosure. That is, if the grooves 7 correspond to the recesses, there are no slots or, conversely, if the grooves 7 correspond to the slots, there are no recesses. Claim 14 adds that the slots have an extent sufficient to span continuously and without interruption in the axial direction two or more of the recesses. Again, Jameson et al. is deficient in these relationships which define a screen for screening pulp having improved efficiency and flow-through characteristics.

Claim 19 is dependent upon Claim 13 and further details the location of the slots, slot portions and reduced slots in the screening medium with the openings and recesses in the backing plate. Added Claim 32 similarly specifies the locations of the slots, slot portions, recesses and openings in the other embodiment of the invention. These various slots and openings and locations thereof have no counterpart in the Jameson et al. reference.

With respect to the method claims, Jameson et al. does not disclose the method by which their filter is manufactured. Basically, applicants' method requires the formation of blind openings in the screen plate and then forming grooves in the opposite face of the screen plate arranged to expose the openings to leave a plurality of ridges in the plate. Jameson et al. is totally deficient in describing this type of manufacturing method. More particularly, Claim 23 forms the blind openings in conjunction with the formation of parallel

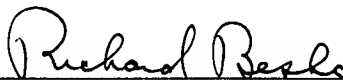
grooves in the first face and thereafter forms elongated grooves in the second face which expose the opening formed through the first face so that the openings extend entirely through the screen plate and leave the plurality of ridges in the second face. Note also that the grooves formed in the second face are recited as inclined relative to the longitudinal extent of the grooves formed in the first face. These steps are clearly not taught or suggested in Jameson et al. and, in fact, no manufacturing steps are disclosed whatsoever in Jameson et al., other than the general concept of cutting the grooves.

Accordingly, applicants believe that this application is in condition for allowance and early notification of the allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By:



Richard G. Besha
Reg. No. 22,770

RGB:alm
2200 Clarendon Boulevard
14th Floor
Arlington, Virginia 22201
703/875-0400